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| **Lesson Title:** Zoning Out in Glades (Two separate lessons) – Part I, Endemic Plant Species and Part II, Impact of Development in a Cedar Glade |
| **Subject area / course / grade level:** Life Science/Middle School |
| **Introduction:**  In the Central Basin of Middle Tennessee are found outcroppings of exposed limestone formed some five hundred million years ago during the Ordovician geological period. Cedar glades are open rocky, gravelly, or grassy areas composed of this limestone rock. The name “cedar” comes from the Eastern redcedar trees in the woods that surround and separate the rocky clearings known as glades. Since the rocky areas are truly the glades, a more appropriate name for this unique ecological area is limestone glade.  Open cedar glades include extreme climatic conditions. Winter temperatures in open glades are similar to those of adjacent forest; however, summer temperatures are often 10 to 30 degrees higher. Thin glade soils generally remain waterlogged during much of the wet winter and early spring, but rapid drying occurs during the summer and the glade becomes a virtual desert.  It is not surprising that glade plants, like many desert plants, have special means of coping with hot, dry summers. Plants growing in the thinnest soils have very shallow roots and are small in size. Many glade plants flower early in spring and set seed before conditions become unfavorable. Others produce numerous seeds and a have life cycle that is completed quickly. Some glade plants are perennials, with thick underground stems or bulbs that store food. Still others survive by having long roots that tap water from soil beneath the rock or by storing water in succulent leaves. Other adaptations include the plant’s inability to be used as a food source for animals or the production of chemical substances that inhibit the growth of other plants.  The factors that influence the location of a plant in the glade include light intensity, temperature, and soil depth (which affect available moisture). Over long periods of time, each species comes to occupy its particular position along the ecological spectrum as plants compete for the same resources in the glade. Six plant zones are recognized based primarily on soil depth. Gradual transitions in several environmental factors are apparent, as illustrated below:  ***Open glade******Glade woods***  high LIGHT INTENSITY low  high TEMPERATURE low  increase decrease  decrease increase    shallow SOIL DEPTH deep  low AVAILABLE MOISTURE high  **ZONE 1 2 3 4 5 6**  **exposed gravelly grassy shrubs cedar oak-hickory**  **rock glades glades woods forest**  **SOIL DEPTH (0 - 2”) (2 - 8”) (8 - 12”) (> 12”) (>12”)**  Limestone glades are home to 23+ plants found nowhere else in the world. These plants are referred to as endemic species. One of the most well-known is the Tennessee Coneflower which received federal listing as an endangered species in 1979. In nature, it is restricted to only four sites in the world. The only way to protect this plant is to protect its habitat. Unfortunately, limestone glades have been used as garbage dumps for years by local residents and development continues to threaten glade habitat. In an effort to protect these rare plants, the Tennessee Division of Natural Areas and the Tennessee Nature Conservancy have purchased large tracts of glade property to maintain as preserves. |
| **Lesson Length:** One 50 minute lesson |
| **Materials:**  PART I: 1 class set of Cedar Glade Plant Photograph Cards and Plant Description Cards (see Cedar Glade website [www.mtsu.edu/~gladectr](http://www.mtsu.edu/~gladectr) for 28 flowers); teacher needs to mount cards and laminate for durability  1 Cedar Glade Vocabulary sheet per person  1 Cedar Glade Zone worksheet per person or partnership  1 index card and pencil per person or partnership  1 cedar glade zone map per student  Set of colored pencils per team |
| **Lesson Overview:**  Cedar glades are unique ecological communities. Use this activity to examine plant adaptations and the impact of development on the plant populations in this unusual ecosystem.  Students receive an individual flower card with plant information. After learning about their plant, they compare their plant with others in their team. Students then appropriately plot their plant on a cedar glade map delineated with the respective zones identified in glades. Plants identified as endemic species are plotted in red ink. Students rotate their zone maps and continue to plot their plant in the appropriate zone on each student’s map in the class. After everyone has plotted their plant on each other’s map, the second part of the activity involves the development of this cedar glade. |
| **Tennessee Standards:**  **SPI 0607.2.1** Classify organisms as producers, consumers, scavengers, or decomposers according to their role in a food chain or food web.  **SPI 0607.2.2** Interpret how materials and energy are transferred through an ecosystem.  **SPI 0607.2.3** Identify the biotic and abiotic elements of the major biomes.  **SPI 0607.2.4** Identify the environmental conditions and interdependencies among organisms found in the major biomes.  GLE 0507.Inq.1-6; 0507.2.3; 0507.4.2; 0607.Inq.1-5; 07074.2; 0807.Inq.1-5; 0807.5.1 – 5.6. |
| **Lesson objective(s):**  TLW describe the geology and appearance of a cedar glade  TLW identify the six plant zones, as defined by soil depth, light, and water  TLW identify and compare representative glade plants and several characteristics based on zone model  TLW describe the impact of development in a limestone glade. |
| **ENGAGEMENT**   * Show the students the Dr. Kim Sadler interview for MTSU News on the Cedar Glade Website:   <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~gladectr/pages/media.html>   * Describe the cedar glade ecosystem highlighting and expanding upon areas mentioned in the video. * Describe what areas of Middle TN are home to these glades and ask students to name the abiotic and biotic factors that exist there. * Give students the vocabulary worksheet which also contains definitions of the plant zones. * Discuss the characteristics of glade plants in relationship to the basic requirements of sun, soil, water, and nutrients. Discuss the six plant zones, as defined by soil depth, light, and available moisture. Introduce the term “endemic species” which are species that exist only in a particular area and nowhere else in the world. To check for understanding, ask students to complete the cedar glade zone worksheet. * Depending on how many flower cards you have created, students can work individually or as partners in teams of four to six. Distribute plant photograph cards and plant description cards to student teams based on zone grouping (see plant descriptions for this information – it is helpful to color code the cards with stickers – all zone 2 plants have a yellow sticker). For example, team one will receive plants that are only found in zone 2. Do not tell the students that they are clustered by zone at this point in time. * Questions: What are types of plants are on the cards I am distributing for you to examine? Why are we interested in learning more about cedar glades in Middle Tennessee? |
| **EXPLORATION – PART I**   * Instruct the students to take 5 minutes to read and study their plant. As they study their plant, they need to list the following information on their index card: Flowering time, plant size, any unique feature in the roots, stems, leaves, note if it is endemic or not, and the glade zone. * Students will share and compare their plants in their team. Similarities will be noted and students will compile a “master” list of similarities for that team on the other side of the index card. Students should realize at this point in time that all the plants in their team are in the same glade zone. Their plants collectively, have adaptations representative of their zone. * To learn about plants from other zones, students will distribute themselves into new teams composed of plants from different zone groups Have students count off within their group and go to the appropriate table. * When all members of each ‘mixed zone’ team have plotted their plant in the appropriate zone, each team will rotate their map to another team. They in turn, will receive a map from another team and repeat the plotting exercise. When all the teams have plotted their plants on all the maps, the original map is returned to each team. It will now contain all the glade plants for the entire class, with each plant plotted in the appropriate zone. * Glade teams will then evaluate their maps. To synthesize the flower card information that students have gathered, ask these questions:  1. What zone(s) have the greatest number of plants? Why? (Answers will vary because only a small number of plants were selected, primarily the endemics.) 2. What zone(s) have the greatest number of endemic plants? Why? (zone 2 and 3 have the greatest number of endemics; glade plants in these zones have evolved adaptations to survive with little soil, moisture, high temperatures, and light.) 3. Why are plants not found in zone 1? (plant roots need soil to grow) 4. What prevents the cedar forest from growing in the glade clearing? (the rock) 5. What zone had the tallest/smallest plants? (plant height and root depth are usually proportional, zone 2 has little soil depth to support the root system of a tall plant)   Vocabulary Worksheet:   * **Endemic species**: plants limited to a certain region, * **Adaptations**: physical or behavioral trait that helps a plant or animal survive in its habitat. * Zone 1: bare rock, no soil * Zone 2: gravelly glades 1-2 in. in soil depth * Zone 3: grassy glades, 2-8 in. soil depth * Zone 4: shrub zone 8-12 in. soil depth * Zone 5: cedar woods, oak-hickory forest, more than 12 in. soil depth |
| **EXPLANATION**   * To help students connect their exploration to the concept of adaptations related to plant endemism, Student teams will share their explanations with each other and begin to identify abiotic factors related to distribution of glade endemic species (soil, moisture, temperature, and available light) and biotic factors related to the distribution of glade species (flowering time, seed production, root and stem length, etcetera) * Some higher order thinking questions which can be used to solicit *student* explanations and help them to justify their explanations are: How do scientists classify plants, it is based on the environment in which they occur or is it morphological and reproductive characteristics? What is the relationship between the idea of cedar glade zones and another ecosystem, like a prairie? What inferences can you make about zone 2 plants without having to go out to the glades and study them individually? What inferences can you make about zone 3 or 4 plants? Can a zone 2 plant be found in a zone 5 area, why or why not? Can a zone 5 plant be found in zone 2, why or why not? |
| **ELABORATION – PART II**   * To examine the distribution of plant species in the Cedar Glen, students will create a data table and graph which shows how many plants were found in each zone of their zone map. The teacher will show the data of all teams on one data table. Discuss why the numbers vary? (answers will vary , e.g., some groups made mistakes. Mention to students that the cards were distributed semi randomly so the data table reflect differences in the cards that were dealt. Remind the students that data is always stronger when you look at several data collections. And yes, sometimes mistakes ARE made but are caught by looking at anomalies in the data. * Have students graph their data on their large whiteboards in their group. Share the whiteboards and point out omissions and differences. Discuss differences in graph type, titles, labels, and unit placement.   Ask these questions:   * Which zone contains the greatest number of species mapped? (this number will vary per team) * Which step of the Scientific Method does making the graph belong to?   Which type of graph is most effective for analyzing this data? |
| **EVALUATION**  Student will be assessed on their cards containing plant comparisons.  Student teams will be evaluated based upon their zone maps  Students will be asked to answer the following exit questions:   * What are some adaptations that plants in the Cedar Grove have? Some things include, smaller leaves so moisture doesn’t escape, or even no leaves, as the pricky pear cactus. * Plants that are found in shallow soils get plenty of \_\_(sun)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ but can suffer from having not enough \_(water)\_\_\_\_\_. * Can there be different habitats or ecosystems found within one biome? Explain. (Yes, the Cedar Glen ecosystems exist within a wider biome known as Temperate deciduous Forest.) * Zones in the Cedar Glen are categorized according to \_\_\_\_\_\_ .(soil depth) |